A Synopsis

of the Ph.D. Thesis Entitled

A Study of Gender and Power in *The Handsome Jew* by Ali Al-Muqri, *The Bus Stopped* by Tabish Khair, *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison

Proposed to be Submitted in

Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Rehab Hassan Qassim Moqbil

under the Supervision of:

Prof. Dilip Chavan

Department of English

School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded.

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

Introduction

The term gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female (UNFPA, 2005:1). Gender inequality refers to the social constructs and\or disparity that results in individuals (women and men) not having the same rights, opportunities, or privileges because of their gender. Gender-based roles begin to affect an individual even before he or she is born. These roles, later on, decide the individual's access to resources, freedom of movement, and even how to behave. People are almost trained right from birth to behave according to their sex(Lilar, 2018:1).

So, it is clear that biological differences between men and woman (sex) are mostly associated with gender (what is socially expected from a male or a female). However, whiles sex is naturally given, gender is constructed by societal norms, roles, etc. that men and women are expected to be socially different. The society provides different social roles to them and expect different behavior patterns from them. The societal perspective of these different roles and behavior patterns expected from men and women, empowers some, while disempowering others. That one way of enacting power and empowering is the way of using language as well as to control the context of speech situation which involves language used and the people involved (gender).

To Robin Lakoff, there is a relationship between language, gender, and power. According to her, language is fundamental to gender inequality and this can be found in the way in which language is used about women and the way women used language (Gyamera, 2019: 64). The way society expects women to speak makes women's speech uncertain, powerless, and insignificant. These societal prescribed speeches disqualify women from position of power and authority. With that language becomes a tool of impression which is imposed on women by societal norms, and thus keeps women in their place. Lakoff claims

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

women and men talk differently and the differences in their speech are the support of the male dominance (65). For example, men like to use direct imperative 'shut the door,' while in the other hand women conversations are full of super polite forms ' would you mind if'. Also, women always use tag questions because they are uncertain and want support. So, it is clear that gender inequalities and asymmetrical power relations are socially constructed and culturally justified rather than being natural(Mosha, 2013: 3); and those realities can be reflected in the discursive constructions of the language used in either literary or non-literary works.

Consequently, on the base of the above statements, the present study will bring a new perspective to the topic by examining how gender inequalities and asymmetrical power relations are discursively constructed and represented in the four select novels, namely *The Handsome Jew* (2009) by Ali Al-Muqri, *The Bus Stopped* (2004) by Tabish Khair, *A Mercy* (2008) by Toni Morrison and *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. That to Bakhtin, the novel is a collection of societal events and it is an instrument of social critique (Mosha, 2013:4). So, with the respect to this idea, this study examines the privileged discursive constructions of gender inequalities and unequal power relations through the language used in the selected novels which are culturally, ideologically, and socially different.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in the study:

- What are the dominant subject positions offered by the various discursive constructions of gender and power in the selected novels?
- To what extent are the discursive constructions of gender and power in the selected novels perceived as a reflection of socio-cultural practices?

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

- How do the novelists deal with the asymmetry in power relations between the conversational participants as well as the gender inequalities between them through the language used?
- What are the causes and consequences of gender inequalities and unequal power relations as constructed in the selected novels?
- How do the four select novelists reveal their cultural and social norms through the language used in their literary works?
- How is inequality between men and women considered one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power?
- How do gender power relations imply a conventional approach of males having advantages over females in their surrounding environment?
- How do sociolinguistic and pragmatic concepts lead to a better interpretations of the four select novels?
- How do the gender roles tend to perpetuate power inequalities that they are based on?
- How does gender shape our understanding of what power is in the first place?

Literature Review

Most of the existing studies discussed the concepts of gender inequalities and power imbalance in many literary works. However, these studies weren't concerned with different literary texts from different parts in the world. For example, Asumpta Mulila Matei in *Discourse, Gender, Identity and Gender Power Relations in Fiction: A Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Grammar Reading of Wamitila's Unaitwa Nani?* Matei investigates how the language used by both male and female interlocutors, as well as the language used to talk about male and female characters in a literary text serves to position men and women as specific types of social actors. A specific focus was conducted on how language is called upon to signify, produce, reproduce and contest asymmetrical gender

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

power relations using transitivity model along with critical discourse analysis for analysing the literary works of Wamitila only. Also, Ernesta Simon Mosha, in her *Discourse Analysis of Gender-based Violence in Contemporary Kiswahili Fiction: A Case Study of Selected Novels of the Past Three Decades (1975-2004) and Young Tanzanians Interpretations*, focuses on indirect exposure to violence against women by examining the discursive construction of gender-based violence in Kiswahili novels. That she has focused on the role of violence in novels, particularly those writhen in the African languages. Since novels comprise a significant form of media in Tanzania and are particularly influential in the lives of young people, this study examined how novelists employ dominant discourses of gender-based violence to depict perpetrators and victims of violence against women, and the way young Tanzanian make sense of these textual constructions. Furthermore, Kuhire Amit Govindrao's *Gender Inequality in the Select Novels of Jai Nimbkar Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy: A comparative Study* deals with the issues related to gender inequality in Indian English literature with a special reference in the selected novels of Jai Nimbkar, Anita Desai and Sudha Murthy.

Objectives

The study seeks to investigate how the language used by both male and female interlocutors, as well as the language used to talk about male and female characters in a literary text serves to position men and women as specific types of social actors. A specific focus will be conducted on how language is called upon to signify, produce, reproduce and contest asymmetrical gender power relations. The study also seeks to unpack the gender ideologies that help sustain unequal gender power relations in the four select novels. The study, also, attempts to achieve the following objectives:

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

- To study gender inequality and asymmetrical power relations in the select novels from a linguistic perspective for the select novels.
- To foster a greater understanding of the unique role of novelists in dealing with how socially structured gender inequality and power relations through in their novels.
- To illustrate the role of conversational theories in the analysis of literary dialogues.
- To explore the role of literary utterances or 'character talk' in the process of constructing gender and power differences.
- To concentrate on reflecting the asymmetry in power relations and gender differences among the characters in the four select novels.
- To come out with new ideas and thoughts about different societies and their different standpoints about gender inequality and power relations.
- To examine how gender roles tend to perpetuate power inequalities that they are based on.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited with the analysis of four novels written by four different novelists. Those selected novelists are from Yemen, India, the USA, and Nigeria. Their views and reflections about gender inequality and power relations are analysed linguistically. The conducted study focuses on the aspects of gender inequality and asymmetrical power relations; and how they are represented in these four novels. Also, the scope of the study is limited by the selected of four contemporary novels written between 2000 and 2010. This study attempts to discuss gender inequality and unequal power relations through an intensive analysis to the selected dialogues using sociolinguistic and pragmatic concepts.

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study comes from the fact that it will provide a sociolinguistic and pragmatic study of the four select novels in order to reflect the gender inequality and power relations through the language used. It will be considered as a contribution for more understanding of the connections between the language and the gender inequalities as well as between the language and the unequal power relations.

Moreover, the significance of the study will stem out from choosing male and female novelists from different countries and continents in order to make a balance between their different standpoints; to avoid bias; and to see how female writers address the same questions of gender and power from a feminist perspective. Also, the study concerns with how each side looks at the concepts of gender and power in their works.

Methodology and Techniques

The present study will achieve its aims through investigating the concepts of gender and power in four select novels, namely *The Handsome Jew* (2009) by Ali Al-Muqri, *The Bus Stopped* (2004) by Tabish Khair, *A Mercy* (2008) by Toni Morrison and *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The methodology of this study will be primarily based on the qualitative approach. In other words, the analysis will be carried out according to an eclectic model that will be developed to fulfill the needs of the intended study. The researcher will select four novels from different countries that belong to different continents and start analyzing them using sociolinguistic and pragmatic concepts. That a special concentration will be put on the dialogues where there is asymmetry in power relations

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

between the conversational participants. Also, the utterances in which gender differences (i.e. superiority of male vs. inferiority of female) occur, will be analysed using pragmatic theories, namely politeness theory and speech act theory from a sociolinguistic perspective. Also, the researcher will follow the MLA style of documentation.

Furthermore, to be more concise, the following methodology and techniques will be adopted in the proposed study:

- All the four select novels will be read intensively as primary sources.

- A special reading will be devoted to the dialogues.

- A special concentration will be put on the dialogues where there is asymmetry in power relations between the conversational participants and where differences in gender revealed.

- The linguistic behavior of both genders in the select novels will be observed precisely.

- The utterances in which gender differences (superiority of male vs. inferiority of female) occur, will be analyzed using pragmatic theories, namely politeness theory and speech act theory.

- Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis will be adopted for modifying the analytical tools of the conducted study.

Organization of the Thesis:

This thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction that provides an overview of the study, research questions, literature review, objectives,

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

limitations of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework and lastly methodology and techniques of carrying out the study.

Chapter two will contain a general theoretical framework of gender and power concepts. Also, it will provide a review of literature on gender inequalities and asymmetrical power relations in the societies and cultures of the select novelists and in their selected novels. The main focus here will be on the theoretical framework that guides this research. Also, it attempts to illustrate how dominant discourses in the field of gender inequalities and unequal power relations describe this social problem.

Chapter three explains the methodology of the study and the procedure used to analyze data. In this chapter, the researcher will introduce the model of Critical Discourse Analysis in a way that suits the adopted theories for the study both from sociolinguistic approach and pragmatic approach. It will describe how discourse analysis has been used to understand the construction of gender and power in the select novels.

Chapter four will be devoted to the analysis of the discursive constructions of gender inequalities and power relations in the four selected novels; and on the understanding the relationship between gender inequality and asymmetrical power relations as constructed in the novels.

Chapter five is the conclusion. It will focus on the summary of the present study. It will also characterizes the findings and shows how the goals are met and the research hypotheses are answered, together with the recommendation of further study.

Finally the bibliography will be introduced at the end of the dissertation.

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

References

Gyamera, V. (2019). The Interface: Language, Gender and Power. *Journal of Gender and Power*, *11*(1), 63-77. . http://doi10.14746/jgp.2019.11.004.

Ibrahim, R.K., & K.A. Waheeb. (2017). A Pragma-stylistic Study of Hybrid Speech Acts in Selected Dramatic Texts. *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies,* vol. 1, no. 3, (pp. 62-77). ResearchGate, http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol1no3.5.

Leech, G.N. & M.H. Short. (2007). *Style in Fiction.* 2nd Ed, (pp. 10-13). Harlow: Longman.

Lilar, Jyoti. (2018). *Impact of Gender Inequality on Economic Growth: A Study of Indian States.* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rajasthan). Retrieved from https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/276823. 15 February 2022.

Mosha, E. S. (2013). *Discourse analysis of gender-based violence in contemporary Kiswahili fiction: A case study of selected novels of the past three decades (1975-2004) and young Tanzanians' interpretations* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Waikato).. Retrieved from https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/7257. 15 February 2022.

Moqbil, R. (2015). *Language and Power in Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea.* Hodeidah U, Yemen, Master's Thesis.

Mulila-Matei, A. K. (2014). *Discourse, Gender Identity and Gender Power Relations in Fiction: A Critical discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional grammar reading of Wamitila's Unaitwa Nani?* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi,).

Oloo, N. O, Ochieng, R. O, and Rew, F. O. (2019). A Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts in Margaret Ogola's the River and the Source and I Swear by Apollo, *ISSN International Journal of English Linguistics and Literature*, vol. 6, no. 1, (pp. 7-15). https://10.22158/eltls.v1n2p88.

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner

Qadha, A. (2019) Language Variation in Pygmalion: Toward a Socio-Stylistic Approach, *ISSN International Journal of English Linguistics and Literature*, vol. 9, no. 5, (pp. 422-429). *ResearchGate*. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v9n5p422.

Stockwell, p. (2012). *Textual Analysis and Stylistics,* (pp. 150-162). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1524600/_Textual_analysis_and_stylistics_. 13 June 2019.

Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics.* Oxford: Oxford University press, (pp. ix-2, 62-69). Retrieved from https://www.scribd.com/doc/204029520/Peter-Verdonk-Stylistics. 27 March 2019.

Wingood, G. (2002). The theory of gender and power: A social structural theory for guiding public health interventions In: DiClemente R, Crosby RK, editors. Emerging Theories in Health Promotion Practice and Research.

Dilipchavan

Research Student:

Rehab Hassan Qassim Moqbil

Rehab

Research Guide:

Prof. Dilip Chavan

Dr. Dilip Chavan
Research Guide
Department of English
School of Language, Literature
and Culture Studies
SRTM University, Nanded

الممسوحة ضوئيا بـ CamScanner